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The Three Messianic Miracles

35: 5-7

The three messianic miracles DIG: What were the three messianic miracles? What did these three specific miracles convey to the people during the time of Christ? Why were they so important? What were the Pharisees and teachers of the law so afraid of? What effect will this spring-like salvation have on people?

REFLECT: Who are the spiritual lepers in your life? What are you doing to help them be healed? How are you voicing the Good News of Jesus Christ in your sphere of influence? Before you were saved, you were spiritually blind. But after being born again you can see spiritual realities. How has this changed your life?

Changes will occur in the people and the land. The people will be healed of all diseases and there will be an abundance of **water** that will transform the **wilderness and the desert**. These things are always true when **the King** is present. These signs were present in **His** First Coming and they will be present in **His** Second Coming. This message has to do with the three messianic miracles in rabbinic Judaism during the time of **Christ**.¹²⁵ This study is taken from Arnold Fruchtenbaum's classic book *Footsteps of the Messiah*.

Sometime prior to the coming of Jesus, the ancient rabbis separated miracles into two categories. First were those miracles anyone would be able to perform if they were empowered by the Ruach Ha-Kodesh to do so. The second category of miracles was called *messianic miracles, which were miracles only the Messiah would be able to perform*. These messianic miracles were taken from Isaiah 35:5-6 because the rabbis understood them to be clearly messianic. Jesus did miracles in both categories: general miracles but also messianic miracles. Because of rabbinic teaching that certain miracles would be reserved only for the Messiah to do, whenever He performed a messianic miracle it created a different type of reaction than when He performed other types of miracles. This will be a study of the three messianic miracles taken from Isaiah 35:5-6, and the reaction and results of them.

The First Messianic Miracle: The Healing of a Jewish Leper



Speaking of the coming **Messiah**, **Isaiah** wrote: **Then will the lame leap like a deer (35:6a)**. And the first messianic miracle was the healing of a **Jewish leper**. Under the Torah, the only time it was possible for a person to be defiled by a living human body was if he or she touched a **leper**. Normally, under the Torah, one could only become ceremonially unclean or defiled by touching a dead human body, touching a dead animal's body, or touching a live unclean animal's body such as a pig. The only time defilement came by a living human body was by coming in contact with a **leper**. From the time the Torah was completed there was no record of any **Jew** who had been **healed** of **leprosy**. While Miriam was healed of **leprosy**, this was before the completion of the Torah. Naaman was **healed** of **leprosy**, but he was a Syrian Gentile, not a **Jew**. So, from the time the Torah was completed there was never a case of a **Jew** being **healed**.

Leprosy was the one disease that was left out of rabbinic cures; there was no cure for it whatsoever. Yet, **Leviticus Chapters 13 and 14** gave the Levitical priesthood detailed instruction as to what they were to do in the case of a **leper** that was **healed**. On the day that a **leper** approached the Levitical priest and said, "I was a **leper** but now I have been **healed**," the Levitical priest was to give an initial offering of two birds. For the next seven days the priests were to intensively investigate the situation and to determine three things. First, was the person really a **leper**? Secondly, if he or she was a real **leper**, was he or she really cured of the **leprosy**? And thirdly, if the **leprosy** was really gone, what were the circumstances of **the healing**? If after seven days of investigation they were firmly convinced that the man or woman had been a **leper**, had been **healed** of **the leprosy**, and the circumstances were the proper circumstances, on the eighth day there would be a lengthy series of offerings. Altogether, there were four offerings. First, there was a **sin offering**; secondly, a **guilt offering**; thirdly, a **burnt offering**; and fourthly, a **grain offering**. Then came the application of the blood of **the sin offering** upon **the healed**

leper, followed by the application of the blood of **the guilt offering** upon **the healed leper**. The ceremony would then end with the anointing of oil upon **the healed leper**. Although the priesthood had all these detailed instructions as to how they were to respond in the case of **a healed leper**, they *never* had the opportunity to put these instructions into use because from the time the Torah was given, no **Jew** was ever **healed** of **leprosy**. **As a result, the rabbis taught that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper. The healing of a Jewish leper was then classified as the first of the three messianic miracles.**

The synoptic gospels detail the account of the healing of **a Jewish leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45 and Luke 5:12-16)**. **Matthew** and **Mark** merely state that **a man** was a leper, but **Luke**, who by profession was a medical doctor, gave more details. According to **Luke 5:12 a man was covered with leprosy**. What that means is that the **leprosy** was then fully developed and it would not be very long before it would take **his** life. **Covered with leprosy** that **man** came to **Yeshua** and said: **Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. The leper** clearly recognized the authority of **Jesus** as **the Messiah** and, therefore, had the power to **heal him**. The only question on the part of **the leper** was the willingness of **Jesus** to do so. At that point, we read that **Jesus** touched **him** and **immediately the leprosy left him (Luke 5:13)**. Then **Jesus** ordered him: **Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them (Luke 5:14)**. **Them** refers to the priesthood of **Isra'el**. **Jesus** sent that **man** directly to **the priesthood** in **Jerusalem** in order to force **them** to follow through the commands of **Moses** in **Leviticus Chapters 13 and 14**. When that **man** appeared before **them** and declared **himself** to be **a cleansed leper**, **they** needed to offer up two birds as a sacrifice that same day. For the next seven days they intensively investigated the situation and discovered three things. First, **they** discovered that **the man** had been **a leper**. Secondly, **they** discovered that **he** was perfectly **healed** of **his leprosy**. Thirdly, **they** also discovered that **Yeshua** of Nazareth was **the One** who **healed him**. **Immediately the leprosy left him and he was healed (Mark 1:42)**. **Because the rabbis taught that the healing of a leper was a messianic miracle, anyone healing a leper would by that very act claim to be the Messiah Himself.** **Yeshua** deliberately sent **the cleansed leper** to the priesthood in order to get **the leaders** to start investigating **His** messianic claims and to come to a decision regarding those claims (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Bf - John the Baptist and the Brood of Vipers**). Was **He** an impostor, or was **He the Messiah** who was offering **Isra'el** the Kingdom of the Jewish prophets? Having sent **the healed leper** to **the leadership** of **Isra'el**, **Jesus** then **withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:16)**. **Jesus** went into the desert where on an earlier occasion **He** had fasted and was tempted by

Satan. But this time **He** went into the desert for the purpose of praying. What was **He** praying about? **He** was praying for what would happen next. **He** was praying that the Great Sanhedrin would accept **Him** as **the Messiah**.

The Jewish response is found in three of the Gospels: **Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12** and **Luke 5:7-26**. **Mark** points out that this incident occurred in Capernaum in Galilee, many, many miles from Jerusalem. Yet **Luke 5:17** states: **One day as He (Jesus) was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick.** What we do *not* have here is merely a few **Jewish leaders** from the town of Capernaum listening to **Jesus'** teaching. **Luke's** account very clearly states that these were *all* of **the Jewish leaders** that had come together from all over the country (**Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem**). Why are all those **Jewish leaders** suddenly having a convention in Capernaum? This was **their** response to the first messianic miracle. **They** knew that **Yeshua** had **healed a leper**. And they knew what that meant. If **Jesus** had **healed the leper** it could mean that **He** was **the Messiah**. **They** came from all over **Isra'el** to investigate **Jesus**.

According to Sanhedrin law (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lg - The Great Sanhedrin**), if there was any kind of messianic movement, the Sanhedrin had to investigate the situation in two stages. The first stage was called **the stage of observation**. A delegation was formed to investigate only by way of observation. They had to observe what was being said, what was being done, and what was being taught. They were not permitted to ask any questions or raise any objections. After a period of observation, they were to return to Jerusalem, report to the Sanhedrin and give a verdict: was the movement significant or was the movement insignificant? If the movement was declared to be insignificant, the matter would be dropped. But if the movement was declared to be significant, there would be a second stage of investigation called **the stage of interrogation**. In this stage they would interrogate the individual or members of the movement. This time they would ask questions and raise objections to discover whether the claims should be accepted or rejected. This incident records the first stage, **the stage of observation**. They were there to observe what **Jesus** was saying and doing. At this point they were not allowed to raise objections or ask questions. Because a messianic miracle had been performed, all the leaders from all over the country had come to Capernaum to perform **the stage of observation**; to observe what **Jesus** was saying, doing, and teaching.

As **Jesus** was teaching, **four friends** of a paralytic tried to get him to **Yeshua** so that he could be healed. Because all **the Jewish leaders** were blocking the doorway, **they** were not

able to get in. So, **they** climbed onto the roof, made a hole in the roof and lowered the paralytic to the feet of **Jesus**. At this point, **Jesus** departed from **His** normal procedure. On previous occasions **He** simply proceeded to heal the sick one brought to **Him**. But here **He** did something different. **When Jesus saw their faith, he said: Friend, your sins are forgiven.** Rather than healing the man, **He** forgave **his sins**. **Jesus** had prayed that **the leadership of Isra'el** would recognize and accept **Him** as **the Messiah**. But right there in Capernaum **they** started to harden **their** hearts towards **Him**. **The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves**, because **they** couldn't question **Jesus**. This was **the stage of observation**. **They** could only observe; **they** were not allowed to raise questions or objections. **They began thinking to themselves: Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone (Luke 5:21)?** Their theology was absolutely correct. No one could forgive sins except **God**. Since **Jesus** declared the prerogative of **forgiving sins**, it meant one of two things. First, it could mean that **He** was a blasphemer. But the second possibility was that **He** was who **He** claimed to be, **the Messiah**. It was at this point that **Jesus** turned to **the leaders** of the Sanhedrin who were present there that day and questioned **them!** **Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Get up and walk" (Luke 5:22)?**

The question was, what is an easier thing for a *man* to say? Is it easier for someone to say to another, **"Your sins are forgiven?"** Or, is it easier for someone to say to a paralyzed **man**, "I'm going to heal you, so **get up and walk?**" Which is the easier thing to say and which is the harder? The easier thing to say was, **Your sins are forgiven**. That required *no* tangible outside external and observable evidence. But to state that a paralyzed **man** was going to be healed was a harder thing to say because that *did* require external and observable evidence.

Jesus went on to say that **He** was going to prove that **He** could say the easier, **Your sins are forgiven**, by performing the harder, healing the paralyzed **man**. **He** proceeded to **heal the paralyzed man**. There was instantaneous observable evidence because **the man** was able to stand up, walk around and even carry **his** own bed. If **Jesus** could say the harder, it meant that **He** was who **He** claimed to be, **the Messiah**.

In response to the first messianic miracle in the healing of a **Jewish leper**, the intensive investigation of **His** messianic claims began. **They** observed **Jesus** claiming the right to forgive **sins**. Therefore, **He** was either a blasphemer or **He** was **the Messiah**. It is evident that the leadership of **Isra'el** would return to **Jerusalem** and decree the movement of **Jesus** as significant. After this event **Jesus** began undergoing the second stage of the Sanhedrin investigation, **the stage of interrogation**. Between the first messianic miracle and the

second messianic miracle, everywhere **Jesus** went a **Pharisee** was sure to follow. But this time **they** were no longer silent. **They** were always asking questions or raising objections. They were trying to find a basis for rejecting **His** messianic claims.

The Second Messianic Miracle: The Casting Out of a Mute Demon



Between the first messianic miracle, **the healing** of a Jewish **leper**, and the second messianic miracle, the leadership of **Isra'el** had investigated **Jesus**. **He** was interrogated and questioned everywhere **He** went. The leadership learned several things. The crucial thing they realized was that **Jesus** simply was not going along with Pharisaic Judaism. **But His most important rejection of Pharisaic Judaism was that of the Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei - The Oral Law**), or **the tradition of the elders in Matthew 15:2 (Isaiah 29:13-16)**.

The circumstances of the second messianic miracle are recorded in **Matthew 12:22-37** and **Mark 3:19-30**. **Mark** reminds us: **When His family heard about this, they went to take charge of Him, for they said, He is out of His mind (Mark 3:21)**. There seems to be a general recognition by this stage in the gospel accounts of the life and ministry of **Jesus** that a high point was about to be reached. Even **His** friends considered the fact that **Yeshua** needed protection from **Himself**, because they felt **He** was bordering on insanity. Then **Jesus** was presented with **a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and He healed him so that he could both see and speak (Matthew 12:22)**. The act of throwing out **demons** was not all that unusual in the Jewish world of that day. Even **the Pharisees**, rabbis, and **their** followers had the ability of throwing out **demons**. But throwing out **demons** within the framework of Pharisaic Judaism required one to use a specific ritual, which underwent three stages. First, the exorcist would have to establish communication with the **demon**; the exorcist would then have to find out the **demon's** name. Thirdly, after finding out the **demon's** name he could, by use of that name, throw the

demon out. There are occasions that **Messiah** used the Jewish methodology as in **Mark 5** where being confronted with a demonic, **Jesus** asked the question: **What is your name?** The answer **Yeshua** received on that occasion was: **My name is Legion, for we are many.** There was one kind of **demon** that caused the person controlled to be **mute** so he could not speak. Since he could not speak, there was no way of establishing communication with this kind of a **demon**, no way of finding out this **demon's** name. Therefore, within the framework of Judaism, it was impossible to throw out a **mute demon**. **The rabbis had taught, however, that when the Messiah came, He would be able to exorcise this type of demon. This is the second of the three messianic miracles: the casting out of a mute demon.**

Isaiah had written that when **the Messiah** came **the mute tongue** would **shout for joy (35:6b)**. As a result, the throwing out of a **mute demon** raised quite a stir among the Jewish masses. **All the people were astonished** and said: **Could this be the Son of David?** They would ask each other, "Is this **the Messiah**?" After all, He was doing the very thing that the prophet said **the Messiah** would do. They never asked this question when **Jesus** cast out other types of **demons**. However, when **He** threw out a **mute demon** they did raise the question, because they recognized **from the teachings of the rabbis that it was a messianic miracle.**

However, **the Jewish** masses have always tended to labor under a complex called the *leadership complex*. Whichever way **the leaders** went, **the people** were sure to follow. Consistently throughout the TaNaKh, when the king did that which was right in the eyes of **ADONAI**, the people followed. But when the king did that which was evil in the sight of **the LORD**, the people also followed. Even in this day, when **Jewish** believers witness to their nonbelieving friends, they consistently hear the same objection: If **Yeshua** really is **the Messiah**, then how come our rabbis have not and do not believe in **Him**? During the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - The Dispensation of Torah**) the stranglehold that Pharisaic Judaism had upon the masses, this *leadership complex*, was extremely strong. Therefore, while **the Jewish** masses were willing to raise the question: **Could this be the Son of David?** They were not willing to make that decision for themselves. Instead, **they** looked to **their leadership** to make that decision for **them**.

In light of the second messianic miracle, and in light of the questioning by the Jewish masses, **the Jewish leaders** realized **they** had to make a public declaration concerning **their** final decision about **Yeshua** and **His** messianic claims. **They** had two options. First, declare **Him** to be **the Messiah** in light of all the evidence. The second option was to reject **His** messianic claims. If **they** took the second option and rejected **His** messianic claims,

they also had to explain to **the Jewish** masses why **Jesus** was able to perform the very miracles that **they themselves** had said only **the Messiah** could perform. The Great Sanhedrin took the second option and declared that **He** was able to perform such miracles because **He** was **demon possessed**. **But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons" (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-16; John 7:20).** They claimed that **Jesus Himself** was possessed or demonized, not by some common demon but by **the prince of demons, Beelzebub**. This name is a combination of two Hebrew words that mean "the Lord of the Flies." *The real reason* that **His** claims had been rejected was because **He had rejected the Oral Law**, but *the stated reason* for the rejection of **Jesus** was that **He** was **demon** possessed. This action by the leadership of **Isra'el** set the stage for Jewish history for the next 2,000 years. To this day **Jews** believe that **Jesus** was **demon** possessed.

Yeshua Messiah responded in two ways. First, **He** defended **Himself** with four statements (**Matthew 12:25-29**). **He** said this could not be true because it would mean a division in Satan's kingdom. Secondly, **they themselves** recognized that the gift of exorcism was a gift of **the Spirit** and even **their** followers were able to throw out **demons** (although these were not **mute demons**). Thirdly, this miracle authenticated the claims and the message of **Jesus** of Nazareth. Fourthly, it showed that **Yeshua** was stronger than the Adversary rather than being subservient to Adversary.

The second response was a condemnation (**Matthew 12:30-37**). In this condemnation **Jesus** said that this generation was guilty of the unpardonable sin, blasphemy of **the Ruach Ha-Kodesh**. Because this sin was exactly what it said it was, unpardonable, judgment was now set against that generation, a judgment that could not be alleviated under any circumstances. It came forty years later in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Exactly what is the unpardonable sin within the context in which it is found? **It is not an individual sin, but a national sin. It was committed by the Jewish generation of Jesus' day and cannot be applied to subsequent Jewish generations.** The context of the unpardonable sin was the national rejection by **Isra'el** of **Jesus** as **the Messiah** while **He** was present on the grounds of being **demon** possessed. And because it was a national sin and not an individual sin, people of that day could and did escape that national judgment. Nor is it a sin that anyone can commit today. On this point the Bible is very clear.

At this point, the ministry of Yeshua changed dramatically in four major areas. These four changes can only be understood in light of the commitment of the unpardonable sin in response to the rejection of the second messianic miracle. The first change concerned the **purpose** of **His** miracles. Before **His** rejection, the purpose of miracles was to

authenticate **His** Messiahship, but after **His** rejection they were for the training of **His** disciples. The second change concerned the **people** for whom **He** performed the miracles. Before **His** rejection **Jesus** performed miracles for the benefit of the masses and did not ask for a demonstration of faith, but after, **He** only performed miracles on the basis of individual need and a demonstration of faith. The third change concerned the **message** that **He** and **His** disciples gave. Before **His** rejection when **Jesus** would perform miracles **He** would say, **Go and tell**, but from **His** rejection on, **He** would say: **Do not tell anyone**. The fourth change concerned **His** **method** of teaching. Before **His** rejection **Yeshua** taught the masses clearly, but after, **He** would only teach in parables. The very day that **Jesus** was rejected **He** began to speak to them in parables (**Matthew 13:1-3, 34-35; Mark 4:34**). It is impossible to understand why **His** ministry changed in these four areas unless we first understand how critical the unpardonable sin was. The rejection of **His** Messiahship on the grounds of demon possession was a direct response to the second messianic miracle. Therefore, sufficient light had been given to them. They had rejected the light and no more would be given.

The Third Messianic Miracle: The Healing of a Man Born Blind



Isaiah had written that when **the Messiah** came, **the eyes of the blind** would **be opened** (35:5). The third messianic miracle was the healing of anyone **born blind**. **The rabbis taught that anyone empowered by God could heal someone who simply had gone blind. But when the Messiah came, they said He would be able to heal someone born blind.** The details of this third messianic miracle are taken from **John 9:1-41**. As **Jesus** went along, **He** saw a man blind from birth. His apostles asked Him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? **Neither this man nor His parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me.**

Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I Am the Light of the World. This incident occurred on **the Sabbath** day as **they** walked in the streets of **Jerusalem** and passed by **a man** who had been **born blind**. Not only was it the time of **the Sabbath**, it was also the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, which makes **the Sabbath** an especially high or holy **Sabbath**.

The question of the **apostles** appeared to be very strange: **Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?** Who committed such a terrible **sin** that this **man** was **born blind**? The strangeness in the question is not if this **man's parents sinned** and as a result, **he** was **born blind**. There is a principle in the Torah that **God punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 34:6-7)**. It is conceivable that **his parents** had committed a specific **sin** and **God** visited that **sin** upon **their son**; therefore, **the son** was **born blind**. But that was not the strange part of the question. **They** also asked: **Or was it this man that sinned and then he was born blind?** In light of the fact that Judaism did not believe in reincarnation, how could **he** have first **sinned** and then be **born blind**?

The question asked by the **disciples** actually reflected the Pharisaic Judaism in which they had been raised. **The rabbis taught that a birth defect, such as being born blind, was due to a specific sin, either committed by the parents or committed by the individual.** But again, how could an individual have **sinned** first and then be **born blind**? **The rabbis taught that at the point of conception, the fetus has two inclinations. In Hebrew they are called yetzer hara and yetzer hatov, which means the evil inclination and the good inclination.** These two inclinations are already present within the new human being who has just been conceived in the womb. During that nine-month development within the womb of the mother, there is a struggle going on for control between the two inclinations. And the rabbis would say that it just *might* have occurred that at one point the evil inclination got the better of the fetus and in a state of animosity or anger towards his mother, **he kicked her in the womb. For this act of sin, he was born blind.** Therefore, the **apostles'** question actually reflected the Pharisaic Judaism in which they had been raised. As a result, they asked: **Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?**

The apostles were guilty of two fallacies. The first fallacy was to accept **the Pharisaic teaching that the child could have sinned in the mother's womb and been born blind.** The second fallacy is that a birth defect, such as being **born blind**, is due to some specific, terrible **sin**. **Jesus** dispelled that teaching of Pharisaic Judaism very quickly. **Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the**

work of God might be displayed in his life. In other words, **he** was **born blind** not because of any specific **sin** committed by **his parents** or by **himself**. All physical problems and death are due to Adam's fall and are a result of the general problem of **sin** and fallen humanity. However, to say that a specific birth defect, sickness, illness, or injury is always due to some particular **sin** or a particular demon is false teaching. **Yeshua** clearly dispelled this teaching by saying that **this man** did not **sin**, **nor** did **his parents**. Quite the contrary, **God** arranged for this **man** to be **born blind** so **He** could gain the greater glory by accomplishing a great work.

Having dispelled and corrected the false theology of **His** own **apostles** on this point, **He** then proceeded with **the healing**. **He** chose to **heal** the person in such a way that it was somewhat of a process and at this point, the **man** never really saw **Jesus**. What **Yeshua** did was to spit on the ground. Mixing the spit with the dirt **He** made a substance of clay and then smeared the clay on the man's **eyes**. **He** told the **man** to go to the Pool of **Siloam** and wash the clay from his **eyes** and he would be able to **see**.

It is very significant that of all the places **Jesus** could have sent **the man** to wash **his** eyes, **He** sent him to the Pool of **Siloam**. This pool was not easy to get to from the main part of Jerusalem, because **he** had to walk down a sloping hill. This was during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. During the feast, there was a special ritual called *the pouring of the water*. In this ritual, the priests came down from the Temple Mount, down to the Pool of **Siloam**, filled jugs with the water of the Pool of **Siloam**, marched back up the Temple Mount, and poured the water out into the laver within the Temple compound. This was followed by great rejoicing. During the Feast of Sukkot, the main pool that was the center of Jewish attention was the Pool of **Siloam**; the one pool that had the greatest number of Jewish people present who would observe this third messianic miracle.

The man went to the pool of **Siloam**, washed his **eyes**, and when **he** opened **them**, for the first time in **his** entire life **he** was able to **see**. Since everyone knew this **man** and knew **he** was **born blind**, this created quite a stir. **John 9:8** records: **His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging** asked: **Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg? Some claimed that he was. Others said: No, he only looks like him.** There was much confusion because many people recognized **him** to be that same **man**, but others had a hard time believing that a **man** who was **born blind** had been **healed**. Finally, ending the debate **he** said: **I am the man.** Then the crowd asked the crucial question: **Then how were your eyes opened?** These were high stakes because everyone knew that this was a messianic miracle. **He** responded: **The man they call Yeshua made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to the pool of Siloam and wash. So, I went and**

washed, and then I could see. Then **they** asked **him**, “Where is this man?” He said: **I don’t know**. Remember, when **Yeshua** sent **him** away to the pool of **Siolam**, **he** was still in a **blind** state and never saw **Jesus**. Even now when **he** was able to **see**, **he** still did not know who **Jesus** was or what **He** looked like.

Then **the man** is interrogated for the first time (**John 9:13-17**). Because this was a messianic miracle, **the man** was taken to **the Pharisees** for investigation and explanation (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bf - John the Baptist and the Brood of Vipers**). Because **Jesus** chose to heal **the man** on a **Sabbath** day, a stir was created on the part of the masses. **The Pharisees** knew very well that they must somehow act on this issue. As **the Pharisees** began to interrogate **the man** to discover the circumstances of **his** being **healed of the blindness** with which **he** was **born**, a division developed among them. **Some of the Pharisees said: This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath**. Because **they** felt that healing on **the Sabbath** was a violation of **the Sabbath**, **they** did not believe that **Yeshua** could be a man of **God**, let alone *the* man of **God**, **the Messiah Himself**. But others, even among **the Pharisees**, were asking the question: **How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?**

Notice the emphasis, not just upon **signs** (because false prophets could also perform miracles), but upon **such signs**, these particular **signs**, these special messianic miracles. When **they** asked **the man** who **was born blind** and now **healed of his blindness** what **his** opinion was about **Jesus**, **the man** simply concluded that at the least **He** was a prophet. However, **according to Pharisaic teaching, though a prophet might be able to do miracles (like Elijah and Elisha certainly did), to do a messianic miracle was not the right of a prophet, but rather the right of the Messiah alone**. As a result, the first interrogation of **the man** did not lead to any specific conclusions.

The possibility of a false claim arose among **the Pharisees**. “Suppose the whole thing is not true to begin with. What if **the man** was never **born blind** and the whole thing is just a trick.” Consequently, **the parents** are interrogated (**John 9:18-22**). **The parents** confirmed two things. First, that this **man** was definitely their **son** and there was no doubt about it. The second thing **they** affirmed was that **he** was **born blind**. So, there was no longer any possibility that there was any type of subversion going on, or that someone was trying to play a trick on **the Pharisees**. When **they** asked **the parents** during the interrogation that if their **son** was really **born blind** how was **he** now able to **see**, **they** quickly decided to say nothing more. **His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue (John 9:22)**. It had already

been declared that if anyone believed in **Jesus** as **the Messiah**, he or she **would be excommunicated**, or **put out of the synagogue**. It was obvious that **the parents** wanted to believe in **Jesus**, and perhaps at this point had become secret believers in **Yeshua**, because **they** saw that **He** not only performed a messianic miracle but performed that miracle on **their own son**.

In Pharisaic Judaism, there were **three specific levels of excommunication**. The first level is called the *heziphah*, which is simply a **rebuke** that lasted anywhere from seven to thirty days and was merely disciplinary. It could not be taken unless pronounced by three rabbis. That was the lowest level of excommunication. An example of *heziphah* is found in **First Timothy 5:1**. The second level is called *niddui*, which means **to throw out**. It would last a minimum of thirty days or more and was also disciplinary. A *niddui* had to be pronounced by ten rabbis. An example of this second type is found in **Second Thessalonians 3:14-15** and **Titus 3:10**. The third and worst type of excommunication is called *cherem*, which means **to be devoted to destruction**. This third level was permanent. It means **to be unsynagogued**, or **to be put out** of the Temple and to be separated from the Jewish community. The rest of the Jews considered someone under the *cherem* curse to be dead and no communication or any kind of relationship could be carried on with the person whatsoever. This third type is found in **First Corinthians 5:1-7** and **Matthew 18:15-20**.

The fact that the expression **would be put out of the synagogue** is used, tells us which level of excommunication **the Pharisees** had chosen for one who would believe in **Jesus** as **the Messiah**. It was the third and most severe level, the *cherem* - to be *unsynagogued*, to be **put out**, and to be considered as dead. Hence, **the Pharisees** were threatening Jewish believers in **Jesus** with not merely a rebuke, or merely being thrown out temporarily, but being put out permanently. Because **the parents** knew what **the Pharisees** had decreed concerning belief in **Jesus**, that the third level of excommunication would be used, **they** chose not to make any further comments. **They** would only confirm two things: that **he** was their **son**, and that **he** was **born blind**. Therefore, the interrogation of **the parents**, as the first interrogation of **the man**, also ends inconclusively.

This led to a second interrogation of **the man**. During this interrogation, **the Pharisees** began to lose **their** sense of logic. **They** called **him** in for the second time and said to **him**: **Give glory to God; we know this man is a sinner**. Notice how illogical this statement is. "Praise the Lord," **they** said, "because we know so-and-so is a sinner." But this is not something to praise **God** for. It is a sad thing when people commit specific acts of **sin**. But **the Pharisees** were so beside themselves over **Jesus** that **they** were no longer able to think

straight or think in a logical manner. At this point, **the man** that had been healed was able to keep somewhat calm and still was able to exercise some degree of control. **He** said: **Whether He is a sinner or not, I don't know. But one thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see.** The statement **the man** made was not just a statement of fact; it was a challenge to **the Pharisees**, one that **they** had to answer. What **he** was saying to them between the lines was this, "I was **a man** who was **born blind**, not simply **a man** who *went blind*. **You** are the ones who taught me that only **the Messiah** would be able to heal someone like me. Well, a man named **Jesus** healed me. So, I would think **you** would want to proclaim **Him** to be **Israel's Messiah**. Instead you call **Him** a sinner. **Then he** said to **them**, "**Whether He is a sinner or not, I don't know, but one thing I do know. I was blind but now I see.**" Please explain this to me!"

The Pharisees took up the challenge and asked **him** two questions: **What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?** **The man** had already explained to **the Pharisees** more than once, so **he** responded to **them** by saying: **I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become His disciples, too?** Of course, this was not a very smart thing to say to **the Pharisees** because that was the last thing **they** were interested in. At this point, **the man** was no longer being tactful. **They** replied in kind and **hurled insults at him**. **They** began to mock **him**, "**You are this fellow's disciple! But we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where He comes from.**" The implication was that **God** did not speak to **Jesus**, so to be a disciple of **Moses** was far superior to being a disciple of **Yeshua**. But **the man** would not keep silent. **He** went on to answer: **Now that is remarkable! You don't know where He came from, yet He opened my eyes. He** went on to remind them of **their** own theology. **We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does His will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.**

There are records of the healings of people who *went blind*, but not one record of someone who was **born blind**. This was a messianic miracle from **35:5**, and for the first time in all of human history it was performed. **The man** simply said to **the Pharisees** that **they** had no basis or grounds for rejecting the messiahship of **Jesus**. **The Pharisees** responded: **You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us! And they threw him out. The man** was excommunicated.

Lastly, this **man born blind** experienced not only a physical healing, but also a spiritual healing. **Jesus** heard that **he** had been put out of the Temple and found **him**. **The Messiah**

approached **the man** and asked **him**: **Do you believe in the Son of Man?** **The man** answered: **And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?** Remember, **the man** had not yet seen **Jesus**. **You have now seen Him; in fact, He is the One speaking with you.** Then **he** said: **Lord, I believe, and he worshiped Him** and was **born again (John 3:3).**

The result of the first messianic miracle was the intensive investigation of His messiahship. The result of the second messianic miracle was the decree that Jesus was not the Messiah on the basis of demon possession. And the result of the third messianic miracle was that anyone who believed in Jesus as their Messiah would be put out of the Temple and disfellowshipped.

When **the Messiah** returns there will be an abundance of **water**. **Water will gush forth in the (Negev) wilderness and streams in the ('Aravah) desert (35:6b).** The Negev is now a sandy desert that cannot produce. It has good soil; the problem is the lack of **water**. But that will not be a problem in the Millennial Kingdom. Some people say that today **Isra'el** is making **the desert** bloom like the rose (even though the Bible does not have the word *rose* in it). But whoever has said that has never been to the deserts of **Isra'el**. **The Negev** is still unproductive today. The northern area that is productive never was **desert**, but merely swamps that needed to be drained. The 'Aravah has the same problem now, which is a lack of **water**. But in the Millennial Kingdom the ground will produce pools of **water**.

Not only that, but **the burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals and other desert animals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow (35:7).** The way of man is to make the inhabited world unlivable; the way of **ADONAI** is to take the barren world and make it plentiful.